

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWING

Appended hereto as an attachment is a replacement formal drawing sheet to replace the drawing that was included in the published PCT application. The PCT drawing has been amended to delete the PCT application and publication numbers, and to add reference numeral 7 and its associated lead line to Figure 1.

Also appended hereto is a copy of the published PCT drawing showing in red the amendments that are reflected on the attached replacement drawing sheet.

REMARKS

The substitute specification together with the amended claims and drawings place the present U.S. national phase application in better form for examination on the merits.

Also attached hereto is an Abstract of the Disclosure presented on a separate sheet in conformity with the rules of practice.

Based upon the specification, drawing, and claim amendments to this national phase application, it is believed that the amended specification and amended drawings and claims conform with U.S. formal requirements. Additionally, the amended claims as hereinabove presented conform in substance with the corresponding amended claims that were examined in the international application. And based upon the acceptance by the International Preliminary Examining Authority of the invention as it was claimed in the amended claims that were presented in the international application as meeting each of the novelty, the inventive step, and the industrial applicability criteria set forth in the Patent Cooperation Treaty, the claims as amended above are believed to conform with both U.S. formal and U.S. substantive requirements, and they are therefore believed to be in allowable form. Accordingly, an early Notice of Allowance is in order and is respectfully solicited.

Should the examiner have any question after considering this Preliminary Amendment, he is cordially invited to telephone the undersigned

attorney so that any such question can be quickly resolved in order that the present application can proceed toward allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alfred J. Mangels', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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Attachments: Attachment A
Attachment B
Abstract of the Disclosure
Annotated drawing sheet showing the changes
Replacement drawing sheet including the changes

ATTACHMENT B**SUBSTITUTE SPECIFICATION**

(Showing All Changes Made to the Specification in Published International Application No. PCT/SE2003/001885, Publication No. WO 2004/056503 A1)

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR COOLING STRIP AND WIRE MATERIAL**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION****FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

The present invention relates to a method and to apparatus for cooling strip and wire material.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RELATED ART

In the manufacture of strip and wire material, the material is normally annealed after being finally rolled or drawn, respectively. In the case of stainless steel, a typical annealing temperature is 900 - 1200°C₁ and the product is annealed continuously after being worked. This follows with controlled cooling of the product to a typical temperature of 20 - 50°C ~~beneath~~ below the oxidation temperature.

In normal operation, the wire or strip speed may be about 1 m/s. Because the cooling process will necessarily take a given amount of time to carry out, it is necessary that the path along which the cooling process takes place is relatively long.

According to earlier techniques, the cooling path is essentially straight, among other things reasons because the annealed material is extremely sensitive to plastic deformation and therewith easily damaged when passing through curved cooling paths. In turn, this means that the building which houses the cooling path must be very long, for instance in the order of 10 ~~metres~~ meters or more. Moreover, when

cooling wire or strip, it is necessary to handle a long wire rod that is used to thread the product through the cooling path to a coiling plant.

Thus, it is desirable to be able to reduce the length of the cooling path and thereby reduce the space required to accommodate said path, and also to reduce the smallest necessary length of said path required by the wire rod used to lead the product through the furnace and the cooling path and up to the coiling plant. The furnace and the cooling path are joined together.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a solution to both of these problems, by placing between the furnace and the coiling plant a rotatable cooling drum onto which the product is wound as it leaves the furnace, and from which said product is unwound for further transportation to the coiling plant. The diameter of the drum is chosen so that the radius of curvature of the product wound onto the drum will exceed the smallest radius of curvature at which plastic deformation will occur and therewith permanently and negatively affect the mechanical properties of the product. Sufficient cooling of the product can also be achieved [[.]] by winding the product a sufficient number of turns around the cooling drum. As will be realized, this enables the cooling arrangement to be made substantially shorter in the longitudinal direction and also to reduce the length of the shortest wire rod extension required to thread the product.

The invention also enables the product to be returned to its original uncoiling position immediately upon leaving the cooling drum. This is beneficial primarily from

an ~~automatization~~ automation aspect and also from an efficiency aspect, and will also contribute to a better working environment and simpler process control.

In order to achieve the object of sufficient cooling of the product, it is necessary that a sufficient thermal mass of the product is rolled onto the drum. In other words, it is necessary to choose the number of turns placed around the drum with regard to the desired cooling effect. When more effective cooling is desired, the cooling effect can be enhanced in different ways:

A first way is by increasing the heat exchange between the product and its surrounding atmosphere by ~~force~~ forced convection.

Another way is to further enhance the cooling effect by introduction of a separate cooling medium. This cooling medium may, for instance, be water which is delivered to the inside of the drum. The cooling medium will not therefore come into direct contact with the product but will, instead, effect an exchange of thermal energy through the inner wall of the drum. This inner wall may be given a material quality that will suit the cooling requirement and other conditions and demands relevant at that time. ~~Millimetre~~ Millimeter-thick stainless steel and thick cast iron are examples of such material qualities. The cooling medium can be applied to the inner wall of the drum with the aid of known technology, by connecting an external cooling medium source to a nozzle placed inside the drum ~~[[,]]~~ with the aid of a slide coupling. Alternatively, a cooling loop may be fitted on the inside of the drum.

Moreover, it may be beneficial, and necessary, to enclose the cooling product in a shielding atmosphere adapted with respect, for instance, to the carbon potential between said atmosphere and the product. When a shielding atmosphere is used, it is

necessary to enclose the drum in a housing in which said atmosphere will be under an overpressure, by way of suggestion. N_2 , H_2 , and Ar are examples of shielding atmospheres that can be used.

Finally, when the product is not strong enough *per se* to be drawn around the drum by the tensile force generated in the product as it is coiled in the coiling plant, the drum will preferably be motor-driven so as to protect the product from mechanical damage due to excessively high tensile forces in the material.

Accordingly, the present invention relates to a method of cooling strip or wire product, in which the product is cooled to a temperature of about 20 - 50°C after being annealed ~~, and is characterised by winding the~~ . The product is wound around a cooled drum immediately downstream of an annealing path, such that the product will lie in juxtaposed turns around the drum ~~and unwinding the~~ . The product is unwound from the drum after a number of turns have been applied, ~~in that the said wherein the~~ number of turns is such as to cool the product to a desired temperature ~~, and in that the~~ . The drum is given has a diameter that exceeds the diameter at which the product will be mechanically affected by plastic deformation.

The present invention also relates to a cooling arrangement ~~of the kind having the characteristic features set forth in Claim 8.~~

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention will now be described in more detail, partly with reference to an exemplifying embodiment thereof shown in the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is an overview of an inventive cooling arrangement;

Fig. 2 illustrates part of a cooling drum where only one turn of the product is wound around the drum; and

Fig. 3 illustrates part of a cooling drum where the product is wound several turns around the drum.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Fig. 1 illustrates a cooling drum 1 according to the invention. The cooling drum is placed in a surrounding housing 2 in which a shielding atmosphere is contained. The shielding atmosphere is ~~under~~ at an overpressure in the housing 2, so as to maintain the atmosphere around the drum 1.

The wire or strip product 3 enters the housing 2 at the inlet 4 and is wound through one or more turns around the drum 1 and then leaves the housing 2 at the outlet 5. The product 3 is annealed at the inlet 4 and has a high temperature at this point. The product 3 is ~~cooled~~ cooler at the outlet 5 and has a temperature which is much closer to room temperature than at the inlet 4. The product is cooled to a temperature of about 20 - 50°C below its oxidation temperature.

The product 3 originally moves from a furnace, not shown in the figure. After having passed through the outlet 5, the product 3 moves to a coiling plant (not shown).

Because the inlet 4 and the outlet 5 can be placed on one and the same side of the housing 2, the product 3 can be passed in and out in mutually opposite directions. This enables the coiling plant to be placed in the proximity of the wire-drawing bench

or the rolling mill, therewith providing the aforesaid benefits in the form of improved efficiency and working environment among other things.

The drum 1 rotates anti-clockwise, in the direction of arrow 6, so that the product 3 will be wound onto the drum 1 subsequent to its passage through the inlet 4, and is wound onto the drum 1 prior to its passage through the outlet 5. The drum 1 is caused to rotate, either by the tension force created in the product 3 as it is wound up in the coiling plant, or the drum 1 is motor-driven and caused to rotate at a suitable speed so as to be compatible with the advancement of the product 3 through the arrangement and so as to achieve the desired cooling of the product 3.

Convection of the shielding atmosphere in the housing 2 over the product 3 wound onto the drum 1 can be increased, so as to enhance the cooling effect on the product 3 during its passage through the housing 2. This can be achieved with the aid of fans [[, ,]] for example.

The cooling effect on the product 3 wound onto the drum 1 can be further enhanced with the aid of an external coolant. This coolant can be used beneficially to cool the inner surface 7 of the drum 1, which surface through the drum wall is in thermal contact with the product 3 wound onto the drum. This enables cooling to be achieved in the absence of direct contact between the coolant and the product 3. The coolant is conveniently applied to the inside 7 of the drum 1 through one or more nozzles 8 situated within the ~~centre~~ center of the drum 1. Delivery of coolant into the drum 1 can be effected in a known manner, for instance with the aid of a slide coupling between the coolant supply means and the drum 1.

The housing 2 includes one or more housing inspection and housing maintenance doors.

Figs. 2 and 3 illustrate detail sections of the drum 1. These figures illustrate the drum 1 located in the housing 2, and the product 3 wound onto the drum 1.

As will be seen from Fig. 2, the product 3 can be wound one turn around the drum 1. In other words, the product 3 may simply be curved around the drum 1 so as to exit on the same side of the housing 2 as that through which it entered, without additional turns being wound around the drum 1.

On the other hand, as shown in Fig. 3, the product 3 can be wound one or more extra turns around the drum 1 prior to said product exiting from the housing 2 on the same side of the housing 2 through which it entered.

The number of additional turns will preferably be chosen with respect to desired cooling of the product 3 during its residence time in the housing 2. This will, of course, vary with the material of the product 3 and its dimensions, and also in respect of the diameter of the drum 1 and other operating conditions.

Although the invention has been described above with reference to a number of embodiments thereof, it will be obvious that these embodiments can be modified with respect to product and desired cooling sequences.

Consequently, the present invention shall not be considered to be restricted to the described embodiments, since variations can be made within the scope of the accompanying ~~Claims~~ claims.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1/1

Fig. 1

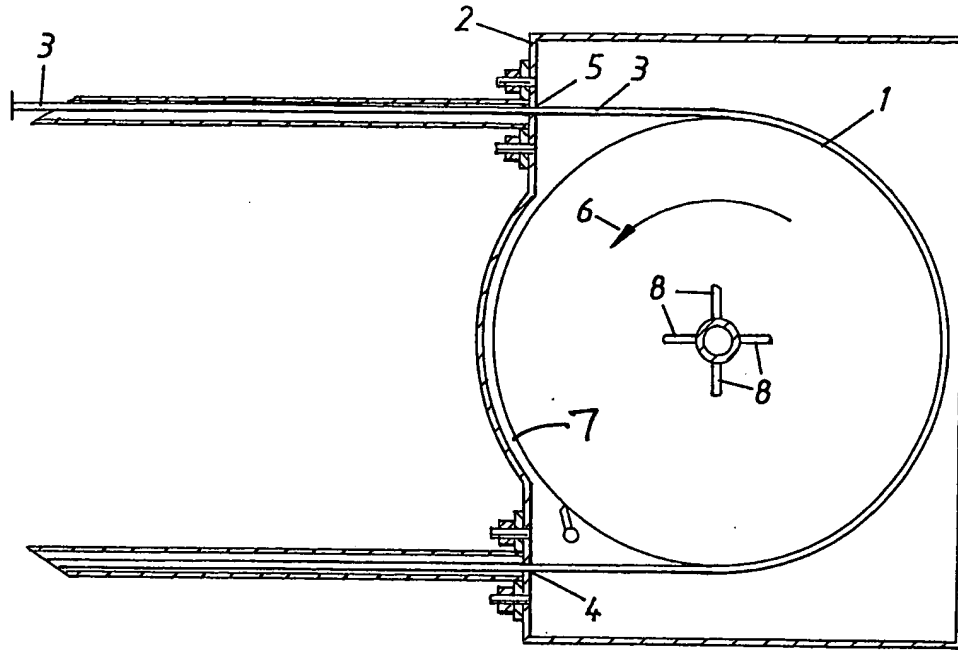


Fig. 2

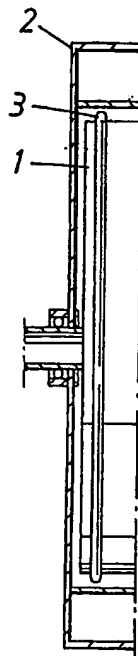


Fig. 3

